

But they wouldn't stop,  
kept pushing. From a window  
somewhere, someone played a fugue.  
They tried to dance.

If you'd just take off your cape --  
I said. The old men laughed  
and spat and swore and pointed  
their guns at us.

The idea, as I said, was good,  
a good idea, but in execution  
offered difficulties really --  
it was the cape,

the damned red cape and the old men,  
laughing and spitting, made it  
very hard to concentrate  
on what to do.

Sirocco -- Palermo, July 1965

Out on the terrace  
a table falls.

The green water in the pool  
wrinkles.

In here,  
in the air-conditioned bar,  
we sip Campari  
and  
through the window  
watch the cat out there  
stare  
at the pink awning  
as it flaps in the blistering wind.

Somebody suggests bridge.  
No one answers him.

An old party in a red wig  
looks up from her book.

Ah, she says,  
her voice trembling  
as she waves a thin claw  
towards the sulphur sky,

is this, then, the breath of the  
wild ass?